

MY BLUE HEAVEN

the independent voice of the fans of Carlton S.C.

\$2

A GLIMPSE...

BEHIND THE SCENES

of the channel 7 sports department



**"I've never seen anything like this before.
What did you say it was called?"**

INSIDE

**Exclusive interview with Carlton's Captain Marvel
- Andrew 'Stabber' Marth**

EDITORIAL

TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING

Things at the club have certainly taken a turn for the better both on and off the field in the last two months. Before the South Melbourne derby the boys had won five out of the last six games. They have started to play with the style and flair we saw at the beginning of the season. Seeing Simon back in the shirt has been great. He's an outstanding player and one whose talents we need for the business end of the season. It was also wonderful to see the great reception he got when he returned. He's worked hard to get back from a terrible injury and is showing the promise and flair we saw last season. He is a home grown hero to be proud of.

Off the pitch things have also improved. It seems the board are keen to listen to what the fans have to say and act on what they hear. The post match situation has improved out of sight with the club once again looking to hark back to the days when we all get together after the match. The club spirit is returning. Everyone seems pretty happy to go into the directors bar for a post-match beer. With the added bonus of getting a post-match wrap from Stewie and taking questions from the floor. There can't be many clubs that do this. So thanks to the board for listening to the fans and acting on our comments.

Sometimes it seems that the Carlton management are damned if they do and damned if they don't. It seems we have a fair proportion of whingers in the club who will moan whatever the club does. The people who moaned when Lou was General Manager and whinged when he left. Whinged that the board wasn't being proactive in securing the club's future and then moaned when Phil Cleary was introduced as the man to look at the club and reassess it's future direction. I realise you can't please everyone all the time, but can't we give the guy 'a fair go'? (Isn't that a famous Australian trait?) We should be available to give him our help and furnish him with all the ideas and information he needs and see what he comes up with. Let's accept Mr Cleary in good faith, that he is a professional and will do his best

for the club. The club are taking a positive step forward, investing in the future of the club. This is something for us to be happy about after the last few months of uncertainty.

Many questions remain to be answered. Where will we play next season? (Not Olympic Park that seems certain.) Will we be renamed? Have new colours? A whole new identity? All this remains to be seen. Not everyone will be happy with all the decisions made but it is a new beginning and a chance for us to have an exciting future when many people were doubting there was a future for the club at all. In the meantime let's get the run to the finals going and on to the Championship.

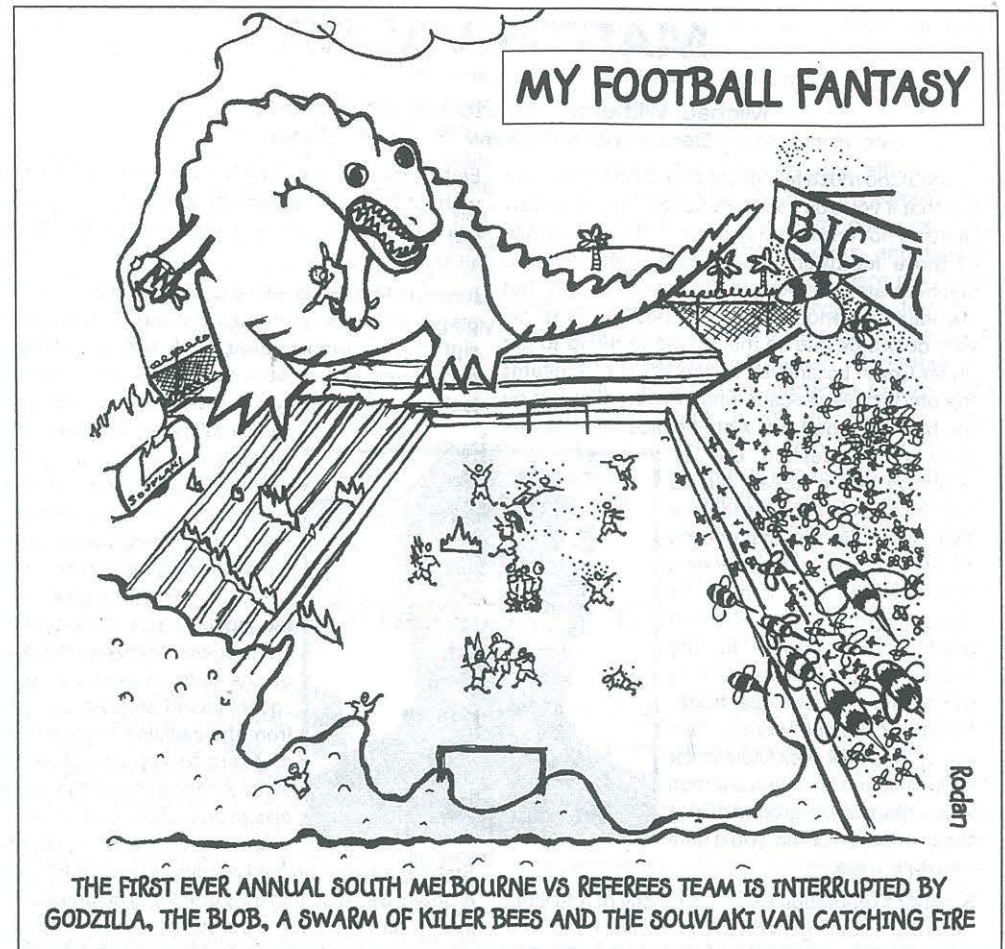
We're in the business end of the season with a challenging run-in of games. If the team rise to the challenge and stay firmly in the six, they should be well drilled for the finals. I think we might all be reaching for the valium by the end of the season, but with so much to play for the quality of football should be mouthwatering. The South Melbourne derby was a fantastic showpiece for the NSL. Great for the neutral observer, though gutting for us of course. I can't wait for the Anzac Day fixture, we have a score to settle and points to secure.

This is the last mbh for the season, so I'd like to thank everyone involved with the zine for their hard work and dedication which makes this little publication possible. My fellow editors, all the contributors, the players who have given us interviews, Trumper and Rohan who work hard selling mbh on matchdays and all those of you who have given us your encouragement and support. Thanks also to our sponsors for their support this season.

Enjoy the rest of the season and sing your heart out for the blues.

In the words of a fab song "we won't rest until the cup is wrapped in navy blue, 'cos a dream won't do".

Sal.



THE FIRST EVER ANNUAL SOUTH MELBOURNE VS REFEREES TEAM IS INTERRUPTED BY GODZILLA, THE BLOB, A SWARM OF KILLER BEES AND THE SOUVLAKI VAN CATCHING FIRE

MY BLUE HEAVEN

the independent voice of the fans of Carlton S.C.

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MBH is your voice - so use it.

MARTH VADER

Michael Witheford talks to Midfield legend and Carlton hero Andrew 'Stabber' Marth

Without too much fear of contradiction I think I can say that if you don't support Carlton, then Andrew Marth is not on your Christmas card list. He is one of those footballing personalities who develop cult-hero status amongst their own support, but are loathed venomously by opposition fans. So why do we devote so much time to trying to get under Goran Lozanovski's skin? What precipitates the predictable cat-calls when Robbie Slater is on the ball? Why do I hiss Ante Kovacevic? Well, the answer to question one is, "Because he's a tosser", but he can also play a bit, and in a slightly lairy fashion that doesn't sit well with us simple, honest folk. Question two...it must be something to do with tall poppies. He played in the Premier league, therefore he's too big for his new local boots. Kovacevic? Well if you saw him run up and kick Alex Moreira for no logical reason, when our man was sitting on the ground during the pre-season comp, you'd hate him for life too.

Stabber's reputation (which is mostly of a folkloric nature, a disdain generated by misinformation and ignorance) encompasses aspects of all three of the afore-mentioned no-no's. Our skipper is resented for his success-holding the silverware aloft twice - his mental and physical toughness - nothing short of 'Rambo-esque' - and for spoiling the party, time and again for our foes, when all around him, his team-mates seem on the brink of capitulation, looking too knackered to pull off those unlikely draws, and even wins when staring defeat in the face. For a period during the middle of this season, when the team was playing atrocious, mixed-up soccer, it was Stabber to the rescue time and again. He's the Energizer commercial brought to life, and we owe an enormous debt to his never-say-die-attitude, which would seem to border on the insane, if it weren't for the proof on many a score sheet. 6 73m. 6 83, 94m. 6 89m. 6 90m.

Eight points there which may have slid away without Stabber's determination, not to mention calm under pressure when converting critical spot kicks.

It was, in fact, the absence of the skipper when we played Adelaide at home, that led to the awful sight of a whole bunch of furtive Carlton midfielders and strikers doing their darndest to look invisible when we were awarded a penalty.

You might be forgiven for thinking that a forward, a goal-scorer, would relish the opportunity to put another notch on the belt, what with the ball sitting motionless, just twelve metres from goal, and the goalie stuck on his line. Think again. With Alex also out of the side, it was up to a square-jawed, steely-eyed hero from the backline in the shape of Akers, to step up and tuck it away. A moment to forget, on a disastrous day, and also a reminder of how important



Stabber is to our on-field survival when confidence is down. Because if there's one thing he does have in abundance it's complete self-belief. On occasion it can prove nothing short of inspirational. I mean, what about that Glory game? You'd think Benny Hinn had given the guy a slap.

"I only trained once that week," says 6, resting in a Canberra hotel the night before Carlton's fourth and final demolition of the Cosmos, and still recovering from the flu which almost ruled him out of the previous week's crucial game. "I was struggling," he admits. "But I was itching to play, and I said to Stuart 'I'll just give it 100%, and see how long I last.'" As he speaks, the remnants of a rickety cough still interrupts his answers. He must have been hacking all over the place at Olympic Park, but it didn't stop him burying two vital, and spectacular goals for the Blues, and appearing to be holding his own, until he was rested with about twenty minutes to go.

So where did Stabber learn his much reviled physical game? And how does he feel about the way he's portrayed; as an intimidatory character, granny killer, animal torturer, etc, etc. "I got no problems with that," he says cheerfully with a laugh. "It's only reputation that might unsettle people. I don't go out to hurt anyone." The development of Stabber's mythical 'Hard Man' status is easier to understand when he recollects his early sporting career. "I grew up playing in the same Aussie Rules team as Mick Martyn (for those of you new to our great land, Martyn is a big ugly brute who plays for North Melbourne in the AFL, and appears on ads when the AFL wants to remind everyone that it's a game where it helps to be a big ugly brute) and I was actually better than him. I could have probably gone a long way, but when I went to St. Paul's College my parents wouldn't let me play anymore, and pushed me towards soccer."

Marth's first serious club action came at George Cross, the famous western suburbs side which has spawned many a great player, and even greater pub stories and urban myths over the years. He spent three seasons there before joining the Knights. It's testimony to Stabber's reliability when you consider that the worst mistake he can remember making in his whole life on the park, is missing a clearing header at George Cross, thus allowing Rod Brown - one for nostalgia buffs - to score a winner for some team or other, after Jonesy had dragged the Cross back from two down to 2-2. No blinding gaffes, no fatal goofs, no legendary blunders, and not an unstoppable own goal in sight. Hey, what kind of a defensive-midfield freak is this guy?

The kind we need as a matter of fact. A bloke who's sure we can go all the way. "Seriously, we can win the championship, easy." And when you hear him say it, you believe it. "We've got the best team on paper by a country mile. I'd be perfectly happy to finish (the home and away rounds) third. Wollongong are pretty weak in defence I think. We demolished Sydney Olympic, and they beat us. I still think Perth would be the hardest team to beat." As you read these words, Carlton should have

secured their finals berth, but if there has been season-destroying disasters in the interim, it's a fair bet someone other than Stabber has let the side down.

Even our uncertain future, which preys on the mind of fans, and possibly has affected the performance of some of the squad, is something 6 looks forward to with a guarded optimism. "I've spoken to Peter and the directors, and they've assured me that Carlton will be there next year, and virtually for ever," he says. "So hopefully they're not lying and there's a good future." One

with a new club name? "I don't think it's necessary. It started as Carlton and I

think it should continue. The affiliation with Carlton Football Club doesn't exist, so OK, but what about the squad. We can virtually field two first elevens at the moment, and that must be a financial strain. "I totally agree. We have got virtually twenty first team players, and I know they want to cut down on the budget, so there'll have to be changes. A lot of the guys are due contracts, and no-one's been negotiating

as yet."

You have to feel for Carlton's 'fringe-dwellers', who would stroll into any other team in the competition, and who we are delighted to have on hand when there's injury or suspension strife. Being a full time professional loses some of its appeal if you spend most of the season in your civvies up in the stand. After the current season, this embarrassment of riches will surely be a luxury we can ill-afford. And speaking of suspensions, Stabber doesn't even figure in the top, or perhaps it should be bottom 20 players who have accrued a multiplicity of yellows and reds this season. That would seem to be the best answer to those who accuse him of rough-house tactics. And when he was shown a red, at Somers St., it was one of the most absurd travesties of justice you're ever likely to see. In the middle of a worrying plague of cards brandished by refs for alleged dives, Stabber was victim to a whimsical and idiotic decision by Brett Hugo. Tripped by a Knights defender, Stabber believed he'd earned his side a penalty, but was gobsmacked to find Hugo waving a second yellow at him. Stabber's opinion of both Hugo, and,

**"Seriously,
we can win
the
championship,
easy."**

surprise, surprise, Ante Kovacevic, who did his best to compound the situation ...well there might be young folk reading, let's just leave it at that.

I wonder how 6 feels about facing our other cross-town rivals, the genuine enemy, on four occasions this season? He's not fazed. "Well we've beaten them convincingly twice," he says, somewhat metaphorically. "And we've got three points and they've got three points. The last game (at Bob Jane) they probably had two attacks, and scored one goal. So we're confident we can beat them at home." Which hopefully we will be doing for the second time as you peruse this issue of MBH.

Stabber wants to stay at Carlton. He wants to stay in the midfield. Hell, he'd even stay at Olympic Park if we could fill half the seats. "But you struggle to create an atmosphere. You really need fifteen-thousand people there," he admits. "There's talk of a huge sponsorship deal with an overseas club, and having a share arrangement with South Melbourne at Bob Jane, which would be a perfect venue for us. And building our own clubrooms on the other side. If that happens, that would be superb."

And as I drift into a dreamy reverie, supping pints in the Carlton zone at Bob Jane, looking at the cabinets stuffed with trophies, and watching Michael W Jnr. Scoring the winner for the Blues, I suddenly remember I forgot to ask Stabber about his nickname.

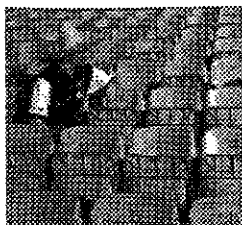
Never mind. There'll be plenty of time for that. In the future.

The Pie Thing

A sad 1 out of 5 and a face full of cake for Stabber in the pie quiz; he knew that Adrian Cervinski scored in the 95-96 final which the Knights won, but flopped when asked who scored South's goals in the 94-95, preliminary final, a 3-2 win to the Knights? (Con Boutsianis), which law was introduced for the 94-95 season but was thrown out after one year? (penalties to decide wins in all drawn games), who wrote Fever Pitch? (Nick Hornby) and who does the admittedly un-famous Greg Owens play for? (Newcastle Breakers).

He can run, but he can't hide!!

THE FUTURE'S BLUE, THE FUTURE'S WHITE, THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT



Wow! Boy do they like to test our faith. Week after week of dismal displays against ordinary opposition, what about that game at Sunshine. But unlike last year we have a great list, Munro loved

telling us, that can and did survive. We are now back on track with 5 wins from six games (before first Smellas Derby) and getting stronger.

Great to see Colosimo back out on the field with Tricky not far away. Both should be running into form come finals time. And oh what a finals it's going to be. Perth, 'Gong, Olympic, Newcastle, Marconi and us, the only representatives from Victoria. I hope everyone is cashed up with their long service leave ready for a big finals campaign. There is NO excuse and I mean NO EXCUSE, best friends weddings, house warnings, or pet died. NO EXCUSE for not coming to away finals.

Just think of the local away matches and how much fun they are, now think bigger and better. Imagine a group of 50 in amongst 30,000 Glory nuts. We have show them we are ready, willing and able to take them on. The atmosphere in Canberra with only seven dedicated fans was fantastic, we could really shake them up in Sydney if we took 100 or so. There is nothing like an away game to bring the fans together. If we all banded together we would have a great time, make tremendous noise, annoy the locals and show the players that they can count on us.

**COME ON EVERYONE, THIS IS OUR YEAR,
MAKE SURE YOU ARE PART OF IT.
GO BLUES 2000!!!**



Trumper.

If you're interested in joining Trumper on an interstate football adventure you can contact him by email at:

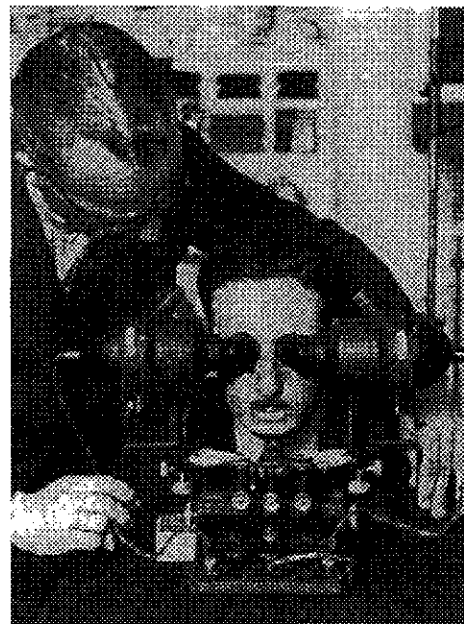
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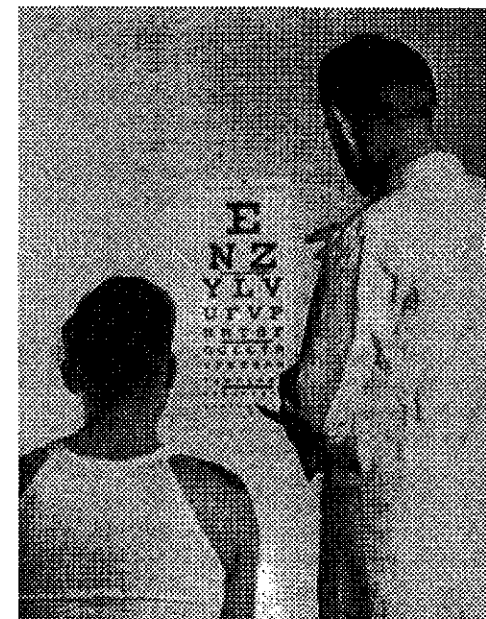
BEHIND THE SCENES

of pre-match preparations in the referees dressing room...

Referee Jeremy Blaney gets ready for the Round 13 South Melbourne V Carlton Match Wednesday 1st March, Bob Jane Stadium



"No sorry, can't see a bleedin' thing"



"E, N, Z, and...oh I can't see a hand in front of my face"

WILD ABOUT HARRY?

Mr Mean cricks his neck talking to the new State Minister for Sport Justin Madden

The corridors of power in Victoria seem a bit smaller these days.

This might have something to do with the imposing frame of our new Minister of Sport, Giant Justin Madden.

Only a few months ago Justin was a well-regarded former AFL player, renowned for his good humour and the fact that he was one of a rare breed – a footballer with a brain.

In what is probably one of the most amazing political ascendencies in Victorian history, he now holds the portfolios of Minister of Sport, Minister for Youth Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning.

Let's be honest. Politicians have never really done soccer fans in this country too many favours. Most of them have cynically exploited ethnic alliances to try and further their vote in key constituencies.

Our former boofheaded Premier was an 'honorary' president of the VSF and look what good it did us. He promised us a stadium at Docklands to showcase The Beautiful Game. He ended up selling out to the Evil Empire and building a tin can so that we could all go and hear Babs with extra reverb belt out Feelings. What fresh hell is this?

He promised a revamped Olympic Park and we're still putting up with what John Ribot correctly describes as the worst stadium in Australia.

So what can we expect from Minister Madden? Well, he is as sharp as a tack and has been well coached in the art of dancing around an issue without wanting to say too much. This was no doubt a skill learnt as honorary chairman of our beloved club for a few months before entering politics

As enjoyable as our conversation was, Madden was cagey with lots of talk about 'vision', 'strategic alliances' and 'stakeholders'. Not surprising for someone who's only been a politician for six months and is still coming to terms with portfolios, procedures and parliament.

Minister Madden didn't bother blowing smoke up our collective arses, he's not going to change our

world in the short term and he's obviously conscious that making promises you can't keep has never been a good career move for a novice polliie.

The bravest issue Justin raised was his soft spot for Coventry. That took some guts.

So here are the abridged thoughts of Justin Madden on a few subjects we touched on when he generously granted My Blue Heaven some time.

We don't have a stadium!

Justin was frank enough to admit "we don't have an appropriate venue for rectangular-pitched sports in this state".

"There is a real need for that and I'm very conscious of that as a Minister, so that's a challenge."

The Minister was adamant that the only way we see a new soccer stadium in this state was if it was multi-purpose. That is, shared by soccer, rugby league and rugby union.

"I know that Docklands has some flexibility built into it but I still don't think that is appropriate for the rectangular-pitched sports we are trying to encourage."

"Having spoken to representative from the various codes there is a desire to facilitate a venue for their codes."

"Stadiums are more costly to build now days because people expect a certain standard. That hasn't traditionally been the case. So when you build a new venue you just don't build terraces, you have to provide a certain amount of infrastructure."

"So if you are going to have that amount of money invested in a facility you probably can't stand alone for one code. We have to be strategic with rugby union, rugby league and soccer and we have to bring those groups together and try and work up an appropriate solution."

Minister Madden said he has already been approached by the various codes about developing a dedicated stadium.

"I'm keen on getting these groups together to talk through these issues."

On Carlton Soccer Club

In the biggest understatement of his career, the Minister said "I think the club (Carlton) has had some difficulties in terms of attendances".

"The product is good, they probably just have to work out their target market and that's an ongoing issue for soccer as well. What is your target market and how do you make it work."

It was Peter Jess who asked Justin to be on the board of the club to help 'increase the profile and broaden the appeal' of the Blues.

"For those few months (as Chairman) I tried to help promote the identity of the Carlton Soccer Club."

"There are some key challenges and that includes broadening the supporter base. How you actually get market share is also an ongoing challenge."

"Sport is a more competitive industry than it has ever been at an elite level. The structure is there at Carlton to be successful...I think on field success will be the real driver."

On being perceived as 'just an ex-footballer'

"One of the challenges in this position is that people don't just see me as an ex-AFL footballer or a politician but as someone who is interested in the full spectrum of sport."

"I'm keen for people to understand that my interest is not in one particular sport or one particular ball game."

"My commitment is very much in terms of what I believe sport can do for the community in terms of economic and social benefits."

"I think that the great thing sport does is that it brings communities together."

"If I can be seen as that sort of person with that sort of understanding then I will be happy."

On why soccer has always struggled

"I think that in any sporting organisation the key challenges are to maintain your focus and your priorities. If you lose that, if you get stuck in peripheral or personal issues, you are not servicing the best interests of the sport. It's not easy for some sports to operate at that level."

"The ones that are successful are the ones that can leave aside those peripheral issues and maintain focus on the priorities."

"There is potential there for fantastic broad range appeal with soccer. It's there but how you actually deliver it is another thing."

The Minister pointed to the upcoming Olympic soccer games in Melbourne as a potential turning point for the sport.

"With the fireworks and all the razzle-dazzle it's a great opportunity for the soccer community to get behind it and get something out of it."

"I hope that soccer appreciates the event and uses it to the advantage of the sport. If any other sport had that sort of event in place they would rally behind it and see it as a key opportunity to drive the marketing of their own sport."

What I think

Henry Kissinger once said that soccer politics made the politics of the Middle East seem simple, and Justin Madden has made a smart career move in not pretending that he's going to take soccer fans to the Promised Land.

Justin said "it's not my role to tell people how to run their organisations but to facilitate better outcomes".

Given that the outcomes we have now are so completely dismal, hopefully as a Minister Justin will provide us with at least the prospect of a bright future for the sport in this state.



NEVER DELIVERS (S.T.A.N.D) PROTEST

Melbourne, Sydney and Perth
4th March 2000

Since Channel Seven purchased the television rights to the NSL from Soccer Australia for A\$25 million over 10 years, you might be forgiven for thinking that it had a commitment to the game, however, judging by its coverage over the last 2 years you couldn't be further from the truth.

They have not shown a single live game or highlights package on free to air television nationally, they rarely mention the results, or show a league table on the news and as for coverage of the Socceroos, you might as well ask, "Who are they?"

You will have read in the last issue Mr Mean's comments on STAND, well they organised a national protest day which, whilst it wasn't a huge success in numbers, at least in Melbourne, it was entertaining and delivered its message loud and clear to Channel



Seven. "We want Soccer on TV". This should be viewed as the starting point for further action; after all it was probably the biggest protest against something NOT shown on television ever seen in this country.

As usual, there was an excellent turnout of Carlton supporters, who gave South's a hammering in the pre-speech warm up match, and we must say well done to South's fans for turning up in such good numbers and humour, as well as showing a solid commitment to the growth of the game nationally. However it should be noted that not a single Melbourne Knights shirt was to be seen, next time any of their supporters give you shit about our numbers, or go on about their commitment to growth of the game on a national level, rather than promoting their own ethnic supremacy, throw this back at them with interest!!

So what is STAND up against? As mentioned previously Channel Seven own Australian Soccer

on TV for the next 10 years, yet as soon as they got the rights, they immediately re-sold them, with restrictions to the ABC. STAND have apparently been trying to open dialogue with Channel Seven for the best part of a year, however have yet to receive a single reply. When they asked the ABC why their coverage was so limited, they were told the ABC could only show 2 hours of the NSL a week. Commitment to a sport? Seems more like a restriction on a sport.

In response to STAND, Harold Anderson director of sport at Channel Seven came up with one of the quotes of the year. He said the network has been sub-leasing the games to the ABC which gave it more coverage than Seven could.

"But the (ABC) ratings are not terribly compelling, however, we are looking at plans for what to do next season," Anderson said. "It's wrong to say we are doing a disservice to soccer, the onus is not on us to promote a sport. The onus is on the sport to develop its game to a point where it will work on a commercial network".

Develop the game? Well it might have escaped his attention, buried in his Melbourne bunker with his AFL friends, but it just happens to be the number one sport in the World by a country mile, as well as the number one participation sport in this country. How much more does he want it developed?

To be honest with you, perhaps we are being done a favour, can you imagine anything worse than Sandy Roberts and his cronies, in their corporate blazers trying to analyse that stunning Mick Conroy volley (this is just hypothetical remember), when the goal gets disallowed for offside? They'll be calling for a change in the rules no doubt as it takes more than 2 brain cells to understand the offside law!!

Mr Anderson was probably saying 2 years ago that Rugby League in Melbourne couldn't work, yet the Storm are the Champions, and recently pulled in a record 24,000 people for a game. Stop burying your head in the sand Mr Anderson, and wake up. Aussie Rules attendances are down, people are fed up being pushed around like idiots by the AFL, they want something new, and soccer is the way forward. If it's just crowd attendances you judge a sport and its TV value by, how on earth can the

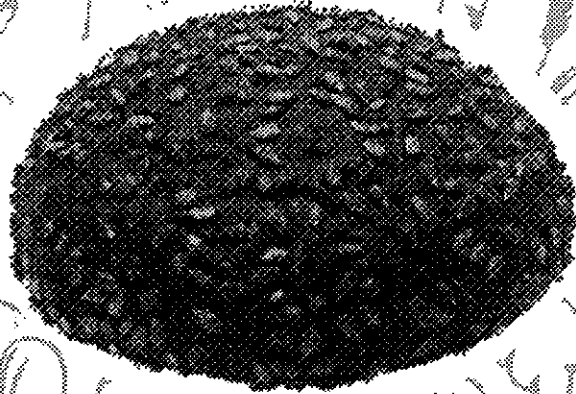
Pura Milk Cup justify any TV coverage? Yet during the summer it dominates the sports news and gets live coverage on Channel 9, how many people turn up? Well probably 2-300 on a good day, yet it leads the sports news, looks like it needs no development Mr Anderson.

So I implore you, get behind STAND and do something for your game, this is just the beginning.

Richard Roberts



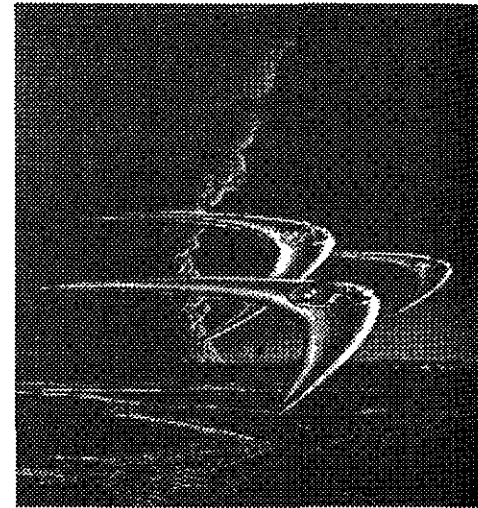
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Dear Coach Munro,

I read recently in PLANETS OF SPORTS that your club is truly multicultural and was wondering if you would consider signing a Martian. I am currently out of contract at my club EAST MARS ACADEMICALS and am considering a move to your city, which I hear is very beautiful at this time of what you Earthlings call a year.

I am 302 years of age, and in my 190 year career at East Mars I have scored 30067 times and helped my club win the Mars Premier League on 67 occasions. I have also played for the Martian Invasion Forces on Venus and Jupiter. I am said to be quick, timed at 2.3 seconds over 200 earth yards, and being ten feet tall and good with both heads I feel I could be an asset to your side.

East Mars are willing to trade, the Gaffer said he would would like Simon Colosimo and Danny Vasilevski for our "D" side...

Your sincerely

ZIXAPK

PS Andy Vlahos has been trying to tempt me down to South Melbourne HELLADSS, have they really won 40 Earth Championships in 3 years????

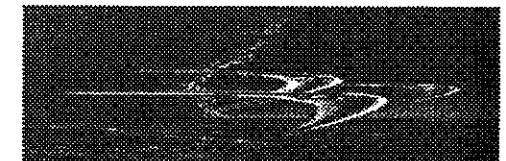
I come from the tight centre where they still reminisce with envy over the Big Bang. It's no theory; there really was a Big Bang all right. Oh boy. Was there a Big Bang. Near the centre there are many Black Holes (or as we politically correct entities prefer - Non White Spaces) and I am pleased to be journeying away, clear of their threat. I cruise past Dwarves (or Small Vertically Challenged Stars) and Red Giants (High and Mighty Stars). There are Gas Giants (High and Mighty Stars with The Wind) and Cosmic Clouds. And Galaxies too numerous to mention, so I won't.

It's some journey this, out from the centre and out to the rim. It's a difficult place out here, away from the hub. A bit backward, a bit rustic. There goes Andromeda and Alpha Centauri, nice places but you wouldn't want to send your kids to school there, if you catch my drift. And I do indeed drift - to your sun and out to its third planet. And just look at the blue of those seas and the marbled clouds and the green-brown smudges of land. I descend through the heat of atmospheric friction and glide over continents nestled in those oh so blue seas. This is uncharted territory for me but I seem to know instinctively where to head.

Continents merge and rush past as I home in on a large, sea-locked land. To the southeast coast I fly, to a city on a bay, where resides the cataclysmic event that has drawn me out from the very centre. To Olympic Park where the unthinkable has happened; an event that will alter the balance of inter-cosmic equilibrium forever. I approach and hear the cries. It's true. It's true. My journey has not been in vain after all. I rest and soak up the scene. Small knots of beings in a stadium below cry out in unison and confirm the event.

Yes, it's true; CONROY HAS FINALLY SCORED. COME ON CONROY, COME ON CONROY, COME ON CONROY.

Bluie Stewie



AWAY DAYS WITH THE DARK SIDE

Four Carlton fans, Big Gay Fish and a very small car take a trip to Canberra

A road trip to Canberra? Right on! Love to...

The equation:
Long drive ÷ Limited time = Early start

Unfortunate as it is that's the way it was. But we're built of tough stuff on the dark side of town so we got on with it...

Straight up the dual carriageway that is the Hume and on to Canberra our nation's capital... and thank god for it too. The best thing about Canberra is that Mr Timothy Buchanan's (and that's 7-up to you, aptly named for reasons that I cannot divulge) car is really small. You stay here to figure that one out, I'm off to stretch my legs.

The Mission:
Get to the pub. End up at the football. Easy.

On Stabber's Mum's word, we dump our bags at the Australian Capital Motor Inn. It just happens to be next door to a rather splendid little public house, The Old Canberra Inn. Nice one Mrs Marth!

It's only just after 3 in the afternoon so for today, this is our beer garden. And a top day it is for it too! The public servants are out in force. Knocking off work like nobody's business. Funny that.

This is where we meet up with our flying friend, the one and only Sheepdog... and the battle for quote of the trip begins in earnest... and duly finishes within 3 minutes with one glorious 2 minute spell from the Dog - Bravo!

From this point however, it all becomes a little hazy... must have been something I ate! Ha!

With fag in hand, I try to order the next round of beers without upsetting the Canberra Police. "Far enough away from the bar d'you reckon mate" I say to the next guy I find standing next to me. Strange laws in Canberra, indeed. How's this, this fella turns out to be a bloke named John. Now John pointed out in his first sentence that he was not a football fan and seemed to stress this fact. So why he ended up at the match with us I'm not too sure

about. Why he relentlessly defended us at the ground to the Federal Police, I'm not sure about either. But why, after the match at the Belconnen Soccer Club (Yes the Belconnen Soccer Club!) did he point out the fact that every time he gets caught D.U.I., which happened three times, the law takes his wife off him. Which incidentally, has happened three times also. There are some very strange forces at play up this way, and that's for sure.

Anyway that bunch of dark blue fellas beat that bunch of red splotchy guys on account of the fact that I jumped around like a raving idiot more times than I watched the opposition fans do so. Vasilevski scored for the second week in a row and, 'our second rock from the Deano' (Big Slim being the first) Steve Horvat got on the sheet for his debut Carlton goal... or so I believed at the time! (Trumper and

Sally filled me in on what actually happened later...)

One momentous occasion did occur, however, when we arrived at the ground. It was the interstate debut appearance of one 'Big Gay Fish'. Now 'Big Gay' may not be known to every one of you but he soon will be. It was generally acknowledged by the entire 1900 odd crowd at the 'Bruce' that 'Big Gay' is the absolute life force of the club and clearly encapsulates everything that we're on about. You can see it on his face (that bit just in front of his gills)... Carlton does everything in earnest... you bet it does. Big Gay'll be up your end very soon, I'll make sure of it.

One thing has to be said. Bruce Stadium is an absolute masterpiece. It was a privilege to be there. I want a replica stadium built in Carlton a.s.a.p. Who the hell needs a bloody University anyway. Why the hell not. Let's pull our collective fingers out and make sure it happens. It's the start of the 'Big Gay wants Bruce' campaign (see me for t-shirts). Bring on Melbourne City!



Seeing 7-up and specky in that emotional post-match embrace. It's enough to make you cry.

Quote of the trip: "and everyone is meeting up at the Belconnen Soccer Club after the match" - Trumper.

Canberra 0, Darkies 2. Nice one!

The Wily, xxx

Off To The Big Smoke

Friday

6:00 AM. I wandered out onto my driveway all set for a big away match in our nation's capital. I sat on the step, lit a cigarette, and daydreamed about buying a little country cottage with Michael Conroy. My peace was broken by a skinny, odd looking fellow with a fair sized schnoz and a larger sombrero. He was clearly attempting to get in the Guinness book of records for the category of most excessive number of flags etc. at a sporting event. He then got in my car.

6.45 AM. Downtown Elsternwick. A young lad who they call "winger" fell into my car. After declaring that he was somewhat tired he nestled into the back seat while the sombreroed trumpeter fantasised about phoning Triple M to tell them that we were on our way to Canberra.

7.15 AM Brunswick. Tearful goodbyes a plenty as Sal Doolittle waved to her man as she was escorted from the city walls.

9:15 AM. Somewhere near Euroa. Ms. Doolittle proved that her prowess as a cruciverbalist far outclassed the other three of us joined together.

9:25 AM. Somewhere just the other side of Euroa. It came to light that some of Ms. D's answers were completely and utterly incorrect and she'd shafted the entire crossword.

11:00 AM. 4 Dim Sims and some rural wit all for a dollar in Albury.

11:30 AM - 2:30PM. Spent driving along intermittent stretches of single carriageway.

2:30 PM. Our long journey was over and we were finally in our nation's capital. I was as giddy as a schoolgirl over the day's forthcoming frivolities. What lay ahead were a few beers, an easy three points, again, and rounded off with big beers with the players at the Belconnen Soccer Club. We awoke the Heffneresque "Sheepdog" who had felt the need to fly up. He was true to form and good for

the first round of Toohey's New. The pretentious winger insisted on Toohey's Old. He clearly did not enjoy this ale but it gave him an excuse for drinking at the speed of a big girl's blouse. The



proprietors of the Old Canberra Hotel (that would be an oxymoron) imposed a no singing before 5:30 PM rule. We were duly flattered that our noise was classed as singing. Sheepdog asked the question "What is a Lapsansky?" After about 6PM it all becomes a little hazy.

6:45PM. Taxis were called and carried us to Fortress Bruce. After a chorus of "Shitty ground, shitty ground" it came to our attention that King Michael The First was warming up. Tonight was the night for Mike to break his duck and were going to be there to see it. (As I say we had been drinking all day.) Apparently we won 2-0. Conroy failed to trouble the scorers but did some very tasty flicks on. We were told off by the police for using rude words, and an alcohol ban was attempted. However, that wily old Sheepdog got more beer. The final whistle came. The players clapped us off, whilst thinking "Have you really nothing better to do on a Friday night." Captain Sombrero then ran off to follow the players and ask if he could relieve any of the tension of the big game for them.

10:30PM Belconnen Soccer Club. All very blurred. Sheepdog vomiting. Dodgy bloke from Canberra with 3 ex-wives and 3 D.U.I.s. Beers with Canberra players.: No blue anywhere. Formally introduced to a big gay fish.

Saturday

8:00AM Woke up with a big gay fish.

The rest of the day was spent in the car making winger cry, and eating a very dodgy souvlaki for lunch. How do I keep my trim figure? I felt bad all the way home but it was nothing I wasn't able to remedy in The Elephant and Wheelbarrow in St.Kilda that night.

Best on Ground: Conroy

Quote of the trip: "At the end of the season there might be 8 teams in the top 6." Winger

Darth Conroy

TEN VERY BAD THINGS WE'D RATHER FORGET.....BUT CAN'T

10) Sucker Punch

With a minute of injury time left against Northern Spirit at Optus Oval last season, a draw seemed inevitable. Then a friend of mine who I haven't seen at all this season, ran down to the fence and lobbed a volley of frankly unnecessary abuse at Robbie Slater. The plainly annoyed Slater then ran the length of the field, drew an impetuous foul, and floated a free kick onto the head of an unmarked striker. Guess the rest

9) Red Faces

Taking on the Knights away, with Lubo and Roly missing was never going to be easy. The ref effectively finished us off when he dismissed Stabber for being tripped; a strange new law which has also been used on Alex Moreira. Deano had already made a pudding of a harmless cross, leaving that smug crowd-baiting git to tap in their second, and although he made amends by having a blinder in the second half, Deano was beaten once more as we suffered an embarrassing and comprehensive loss.

To compound things, there was internal bickering within our own fanbase, and I got called "scum" by one of the Knights more philosophical followers, but then, I always get called something unpleasant at away games. Why go otherwise?

Then virtually no Carlton people turned up at the CD launch, even though Stu Munro and Sean Douglas managed to. And a good time was had by several, and missed by many.

8) GBH

Whatever he meant to do, or might have been thinking, Andy Cole almost ended Simon Colosimo's career with a crazy lunge in the Man U v Socceros game in Sydney. About as exciting as a cup of warm Milo, the pseudo-sporting event was a farcical circus, and nothing more than a cash cow for Rivkin and his chums, which made the sight of Simon writhing in the agonies of what was instantly, obviously a serious injury all the more tragic for him and for us. Thankfully, they could rebuild him. Andy Cole meanwhile has been taking lessons from John Howard, on how not to say sorry.

7) Hey Joe

Where you goin' with those crutches under yo arm? Dazzling in pre-season matches, and luminescent in the first few matches of the seasons, Joe Tricarico

was shaping up as an even better flanker than Rob Trajkowski. Then some Adelaide hoon crippled him, and we've struggled to get behind the opposition defence on the right side all season. Hopefully we'll make the six, and hopefully Joey will be fit enough to come into consideration.

6) The Long And Winding Road

In our first season Archie Thompson was already proving himself a True Blue at heart, even though he played for the Falcons. His goal against...um...Adelaide I think, bumped us above the erstwhile Zebras into 2nd spot and primed us for a home and away clash with South with a spot in the final up for grabs.

At Optus they went two up, but a late Jonesy header gave us a sniff for a second leg recovery. We needed to score at least 2, and win, but Lozza made life tougher still in the first half by adding to our deficit. From then on the mountain was too high to scale. Two frustrating and painful defeats, which seemed to have perhaps sapped our morale.

Fortunately we broke Marconi's 8-1-1 formation down in the sudden death preliminary final, and made it to the 'big night out' anyway.

5) Ciao

Nothing lasts forever, and in the case of Vince Grella and Marco Bresciano, it was strange men in suits waving great wedges of cash who inflicted a forced separation between Carlton and our two brightest young stars. Their absence contributed to our slippery slide down the ladder in the second half of last season. We won't forget them. We hope they won't forget us.

Others we have sorely missed are, of course, Andy Vlahos, but the unforgivable return to the wrong side of the tracks has soured our memories there. Marusic; mad as cheese to be sure, but on song, easily the best player in the NSL. Rob Trajkowski's ghosting overlaps and wicked crosses are now part of the Glory armoury, but at least Jonesy got sick of wearing the Showbiz strip.

4) Losing Lou

Everyone was shocked when Lou Sticca announced he was stepping aside as GM of the club which would not have existed without his energy and commitment. Even if certain decisions back-fired or

seemed ill-conceived in hindsight, Lou always strove to activate interest in the Blues any way he could. Anybody who spoke with Lou will know he was extraordinarily accessible, and valued the opinions of all supporters. He was never the kind of faceless mogul to barricade himself behind glass with the corporate guests. And when he was obliged to entertain bigwigs, he often quietly expressed his frustration at not being able to join us in the cheap seats, and have a bit of a sing. The club will be hard pushed to find a replacement with his unbridled passion for the Blues.

3) Show Me The Way To Go Home.

How would you feel stuck in a hillbilly town, bent double with the toxic effects of the local bacterially saturated take away chook, attempting to watch a game illuminated by 16 candles and the headlights from a 74 Kingswood, with rain smashing vertically into your face as if fired from the water cannon on a tank turret, while a player who had just signed for your team scored the winner for the other team? You'd feel like we did at Morwell last season.

3) Losing The Plot

After half a dozen excellent derbies, our rivalry with Zee Peeegz had already matured into the hottest fixture of the NSL after just one and a half seasons. But when we hosted South for our first home game at Olympic Park a year ago, the anticipated fireworks fizzled and died. They never looked like losing, we never looked like scoring, and after a three-zip whitewash the scene was set for our plunge out of the finals placings.

2) Ready Eddie Go

Firstly, the guy was fortunately replaced by a decent coach. Whether Stuart M can be judged as a more effective coach...most would probably say the jury is still out. The most unfortunate aspect of Eddie Krncevic's departure was the obvious lingering acrimony between himself and the board. From what I've heard neither has a high opinion of the other these days, and it's also difficult to gauge how the players felt about the affair, because again opinion seems divided, and rumour can rapidly degenerate from half-truth to total twaddle.

Personally, I thought at the time that our poor form in the latter part of last season was chiefly due to the long list of injured absentees, and the transfer of some of our stars. Stuart seems more pro-active, but also...well...a bit stressed most of the time I guess. Has

anyone seen him throw his head back and have a great big laugh?

A nasty break-up anyway, and not the way we'd like to farewell a bloke who took a team to the final in it's first year.

1) You're supposed to be at home!!

As in, ho ho ho, where are all the people then? A familiar taunt from visiting supporters as we sit, dotted like flies on a dunnie door, amidst the expanse of a 30,000 person capacity stadium. The club has tried everything this year, from kitsch and gimmicks (people in funny costumes, alleged "personalities", backyard fireworks) to baffling TV ads which managed to develop a confusing plot-line within a minute. (Was Steve Lollyland talking to someone in England from a phone in Oz? Or someone in Oz from a pub in England? Or someone in Melbourne from a phone in an English pub in Melbourne?) Fixtures were shunted back and forth in various experimental time-slots, but still the masses turned their backs. Even the stupendous Lust In Space CD couldn't increase crowd figures.

The most popular theory about our inability to capture a bit of the current soccer zeitgeist, which has been a barnstorming success in Perth, and was too in North Sydney, until the Spirit started losing (and half the crowd went back to sitting on their yachts at Kirribilli on a Friday night sipping Moet) is that Carlton is a VERY, VERY bad name for a Melbourne soccer team. Me, I don't give a flying fox. I support the Lions and was happy to cheer Carlton on against the Strikers, then hurl invective at Elliot's Carlton the same weekend. It seems I'm in a minority though, and there are plenty of potential soccer fans out there who can't bring themselves to spit the name Carlton out, unless they're ordering a beer.

A name change is inevitable. However much that affects our dire attendances remains to be seen. The other major issue is the venue, which as we all know, is too big, too multi-purpose, too difficult to get to, too expensive to park at, and should be toodle-ooed. A percentage poll for co-tenancy at Bob Jane would probably fall to the affirmative, particularly if the open sides of that ground are to be developed, affording Melbourne a purpose built stadium to rival Hindmarsh. Other than that, I'm buggered if I know where everybody is.

10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1, Con Friggin Boutsianis and Eugene Friggin Brazzale.

Michael W

A GLIMPSE...

BEHIND THE SCENES

of Soccer Australia's strategic planning meeting



**"One potato, two potato, three potato four,
should we have 12 teams,
should we have more?"**

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Corinthians, Juventus, Arsenal, Everton, Heart of Midlothian, and Espanyol.. What do all of these clubs have in common?

- A. They are the six best clubs in the world.
- B. Dave Jones of Southampton has been on scouting missions to watch their youth teams.
- C. Mike Conroy has scored for them.
- D. None of the above.

The answer is of course D. The other answers can be excluded as follows.

- Everyone knows that Everton are a spent force.
- Dave Jones is no longer with Southampton.
- FIFA '99 on the Playstation doesn't count.

They do however have one startling fact in common. They do not mention the name of their city in their name. Did this hinder any of them over the years? No it did not. Do they have their own identity and a huge international following? Yes they do.

A lot has been said since I started following Carlton that we have to change our name. I simply do not understand. We are Carlton Soccer Club. That shows where we started, and what our history is. It's a cultural thing. The main arguments in favour of changing our name are that we no longer play in Carlton and that we stop non-Carlton Aussie rules supporters coming to the games.

It doesn't matter where we play our games. We are still the same club with many of the same supporters sharing the same dreams and memories as they have over the last few years. The Aussie rules supporter, though a passionate and amicable fellow, does not tend to be a rocket scientist. The reason that they are not attending games is not due to the name, but because they think that they do not like soccer, as that's what their father and their father's father drummed into them. Do we think that all these AFL supporter's are pottering off to Sunshite or to see the South Melbourne bellends on a weekly basis? If they are, these clubs aren't declaring the full attendance. We could boost our attendances by tapping in to this market but a name change won't do it. What is the answer? It's all well and good for me to sit here chuntering away without making any

suggestions. How about this? We kick off games at OP two and a half hours before centre bounce at the MCG (Melbourne Cricket Ground not Michael Conroy Garden). The AFL supporters whose teams are playing at the MCG that afternoon get half price entry when they show their club's membership card at the gate. Ok we're not getting the full ticket price but half of something is better than all of nothing. We have nothing to lose by trying something like this. Let's face it, if we get many more crowds of 1700, this time next year, we'll all be chanting for MacNicholl as apposed to questioning his sexuality.

We have nothing to gain from a name change. Except for yet another couple of years of establishing ourselves as a Melbourne sporting identity. We have an identity now. Let's not lose or forget everything that has been put into creating this identity over the last few years. Lou Sticca made a soccer club in a place called Carlton. Thus it was called Carlton Soccer Club. We may have moved on but WE ARE CARLTON. Be proud of it and never forget.

May the scores be with you.
Darth Conroy.

Interesting idea about combining the Olympic Park entrance fee with an AFL ticket for the MCG, however one problem looms. Friday nights at the MCG bounce at 8.10pm meaning that our kick-off would be 5.40pm, whilst on Saturdays and Sundays the majority of the games bounce at 2.10pm meaning we would kick off at 11.40am, probably not practical, but you'll get a lot more drinking time!! - Ed



HORNBY AND KUPER

The Best Team On Paper ?

In the distant past, before it could be imagined that every home would have a VCR tucked under the telly, and when soccer was a once a week TV experience, every second of footy on the small screen had to be savoured with an intense concentration of the senses.

My memory of seventies soccer begins to coalesce from about 1971 when I was nine. All that was on offer then was Match Of The Day; quite literally a one game, one chance lucky dip, more often than not a 0-0 draw between Arsenal and Southampton, shown almost verbatim; with no highlights of any other games, and a stone age version of the instant replay which repeated the action accidentally sped up to Keystone Cops velocity, as often as slowed down for closer scrutiny. Then around 74 came the Big Match. Three games! And a letters segment, where magic moments, often of purely esoteric interest to the lucky letter writer, were dusted off for misty eyed Stockport or Rotherham fans, eager to re-live their few seconds of cup glory, or that freak strike from a long forgotten centre forward which miraculously occurred on the day the cameras came to town.

With so little broadcast space, a mis-timed blink of the eye, or poke of the fire during one of these programs often meant a classic 70s goal would vanish into the ether, never to be seen again. Or so it seemed. Now that there's a plethora of videotapes available for every team from Man U to Macclesfield we old-timers can finally attempt to re-ignite the breathless thrills of childhood, by taking three seconds of joy from twenty-five years ago, and watching it so many times someone could point to any face on the terraces at the game, and we could tell you how they reacted to the goal/miss/save. But the past is a different country, and the piquancy can never really be created twice.

One of the most vivid memories of my life is being taken into a television control room and being led to a monitor showing a game...in COLOUR. It was Wolves versus Birmingham, from the Midlands TV soccer program Star Soccer. The game itself was irrelevant. I was utterly transfixed by the splendour of the grass, the shock of seeing Wolves in their poo-coloured cotton shirts, and their bitter rivals in their lurid blue, with the white skunk stripe down

the centre. Soon after, my family were invited to watch the 74 FA Cup final in colour. Not in anything as comfortable as a house mind you, or even a pub. We had to sit on the floor of a transmitting station half way up a mountain, surrounded by metal consoles, wires, knobs and other unknown televisual appliances which buzzed and crackled all night. It was a crap one-sided game but I was happy because Liverpool won, and I even became accustomed to the fact that the Newcastle shirts were the only thing in familiar black and white.

Dad finally splashed out on a colour set, purposefully on the eve of the 78 World Cup - the Argentinian junta had taken time out from beating up their own to splash out on colour TV broadcasting equipment at the same time, which was fortuitous - and I stayed up all night to experience a satellite breakdown, and a screen hissing with white noise, just as the only goal of a grim opening encounter went in.

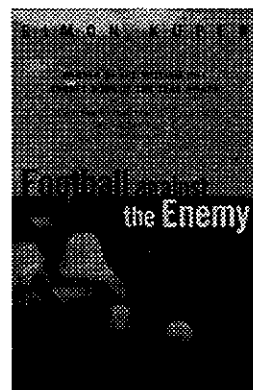
This is why the modern day coverage of soccer makes me, on the one hand envy the young enthusiast and yet sense that this over-exposure somehow detracts from the preciousness of the game. Those glory days of the 70s when I quivered in anticipation at the thought of another brief hit of Charlie George, Steve Heighway, Stan Bowles, Rodney Marsh and the other footballing popstars of the era simply can't be equalled by even the most breathtaking of current games. I cast a desultory eye over the Saturday SBS package, but all that skill, all those goals, all that global soccer overload; after a while the senses are dulled, and you long for an hour's worth of TV "action" from a mid-table, midweek, mid-winter scrap between two English Division Three teams, just to be reminded again that football is an idiotic pastime, which we follow on the off chance something might happen in the midst of relentless mediocrity. This is why it is such a joy to be passionate about a team. Eighty nine minutes of excremental farce can be erased instantly by a winner in the dying seconds.

So it is that being a Carlton supporter has re-ignited a hopeless devotion to soccer which I never expected to feel after my teenage years. Fortunately, we at C.S.C are in a position which the hardcore York City supporter, for example, may

never experience. Firstly our team can play, and frequently plays with such flair that a silly error costing us a win, or even an honourable loss can be borne with relative good humour, and will only ruin our weekend rather than our entire week. Some teams are so poor, so lacking in rudimentary ideas, that the accumulation of points is the only possible pleasure that can be derived from supporting them. In their early top flight days, Wimbledon never bothered with things like passing or possession. They merely kicked the ball relentlessly towards the opposing goalmouth, and waited until somebody got a toe or a glancing head on the flying leather, thus felling all the Goliaths of the English game. It was ugly football, but when you've just done Liverpool, aesthetics are irrelevant. However if your team plays a primitive version of the game, and also happens to lose a lot, there's really little point in you wasting your life on them.

The other advantage of being a Blues fan is that we win quite a few games, and that in all our three years we've reached the fourth quarter of the season still in the hunt for a grand final place. This intensifies the involvement of the average fan, and allows him or her to daydream constantly of the moment Stabber holds the trophy aloft.

Which brings me circuitously to two outstanding football books, which are neither new, nor unknown, but perhaps contain the best explanations of how the game can take over your life. And for this they should be on the shelf of every true fan's home.



Simon Kuper's 'Football Against The Enemy' is an extraordinary exploration into the effect soccer has on the nations of the world, and the well-being of their people. It is frequently hilarious, but equally disturbing, as the young Dutch/English journalist, who is a kind of football mad P J

O'Rourke uncovers unbelievable histories of corruption, and political and military interference in the game, which remind you that football is the only total global language, and for this it must pay by being torn asunder by ethnic rivalries. Your worst

fears about meddling Presidents, refs for sale, rigged games and intimidation are little preparation for the awful truth revealed by Kuper, as he travels to every continent (except squeaky clean Oceania natch) and talks to a bewildering array of players, officials, writers, politicians and interferers, most of whom leave you with the feeling that the game of soccer is merely a vehicle for the criminally insane to vent their sociopathic urges.

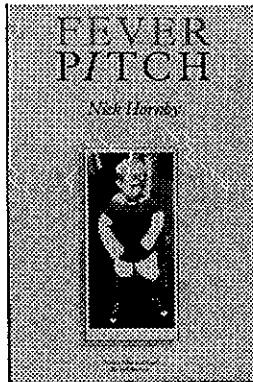
As someone who doesn't understand how ethnicity can be such a big deal this book provides plenty of penetrating insights into cultural hatreds. You're still left thinking everyone should stop rattling their sabres and grow up however. Of particular shocking fascination is the lengths the Argentinian Generals went to in order to get their mitts on the World Cup in 1978. Who can forget the...umunusual 6-0 defeat of Peru? Cameroonian hero Roger Milla comes across as being as mad as cheese, and you can chortle heartily as Kuper watches the Americans failing to get their heads around the importance of the World Cup which they were hosting (Local soccer journos always pronounced it World Cup, with emphasis on 'world' to try and convey the gravitas of the event to millions of folks who only understood a football as something you threw; hence the name)

The most interesting chapter of the book in terms of a local angle concerns Croatia, and President Franco Tudjman's... participation, shall we say, in the newly formed state's soccer presence. It was at his insistence that the former Dynamo Zagreb be re-named Croatia Zagreb, against the wishes it seems of most supporters. Mark Viduka, interviewed during his time playing there, is quoted as saying soccer players can do more for Croatia than soldiers laying down their lives, and, stop me if you've heard this one before, but it was only after Tudjman phoned him in Melbourne that Viduka could be coaxed to head for Zagreb at all.

The ironic timing of David Hill's efforts to de-ethnicise Australian soccer around the same time as the emergence of Croatia as an independent state has created a headache for our own Melbourne Knights. On the one hand the Knights want to represent the Western suburbs of the city, and attract people of all backgrounds, and yet for those who have settled here from Croatia, the loss of identity would possibly symbolise a lack of patriotism at a time when the country, rightly or wrongly, wishes to emphasise its separation from

Yugoslavia in a big loud voice. Whichever way you look at it, surely it was a bit stupid to afford Tudjman - who comes across in the book as your common or garden megalomaniac - a minute's silence at an Australian national league soccer game.

Anyway the book's a mind-boggling expose of the way culture, politics and football affect one another, and the strange things that happen when they do.



More prosaic, but much more likely to put a warm glow in your heart is Nick Hornby's 'Fever Pitch'. By now, most soccer fans have heard of the book if not read it. Hornby's touching autobiography about his tragic devotion to Arsenal was the first of the new wave of soccer books which broke the

mold of the ghost written hagiographies, and sociological tomes which you normally found filed under soccer in libraries and book shops. Here at last was a charming and witty everyman's description of the unadulterated lunacy of fandom, and how the experience of watching 22 blokes running around kicking a cow-skin orb at one another can totally consume your life. If you've seen the film, but haven't read the book, don't be misled by the slightly sickly romance angle. Sure, the book weaves other life experiences into the visits to Highbury, but the essence of Fever Pitch is the message that football is the framework around which all the other bits and pieces of life are carelessly glued. Anyone who can't understand our obsession will still think we're mad after reading this book, but at least they might have more sympathy for our condition.

Fever Pitch is also a joy because it does manage to evoke the magic which is somehow de-saturated on nostalgic videos, both the elation and the despair of the beautiful game, particularly as it exists for a teenager, when life itself seems to hinge on the outcome of a game somewhere, sometime, in every town on the big soccer ball we call planet Earth. Go buy them both.

Michael W

KOP THIS

Last night I did some-thing I've held off doing all season. I was one of 11400 who turned up at Sunshine's tip to witness the Knights - Hellas derby. The announcer assured those present that this was a record tip attendance, old-timers mentioned the year of the great garbos strike when seagulls were seen standing on each others shoulders prior to the bulldozers moving in. Thankfully the smell has gone now, but the garbage was still on the park for all to see. Except for one sparkling glow, the reason for my homage, a duty I felt obliged to make. "Peter Beardsley" yes there's only one Peter Beardsley!

A Beardsley fan I have always been, and although lumping a few kilos mid-drift his energy and pace was evident in some flashes of brilliance coming close with a fine effort after a shimmy and creating an opportunity which brought about a fine save from the Hellas keeper towards the end of the first half. I was looking forward to more of the same in the second half so I made my way to the south terrace whilst avoiding the obligatory 'them' versus 'them' versus 'cops' running fisti-cluffs. (Why is this so?) As I waited for the teams to appear for the second half I couldn't help thinking how lacking the atmosphere was for such a big crowd. How lucky we are to have Olympic Park with its stands and how a crowd of similar size would lift the roof of the east stand. One can only ponder if a drawcard of note would attract the fans in a similar fashion.

Having been to Bob Jones Tyre-mark for our recent hiccup, I am convinced Oly-park should remain our home at all costs. (I've heard rumours) If we're going to for-ever be a tenant then we might as well have the best home on the block, at least we can sit them down and make people welcome if they ever decide to visit. On the other hand they've recently closed the tip at Newport out the west side of town. Me thinks its canny- they've planted some palm trees and installed a man-made lake.

Back to the second half of Beardsley, well it never got going for him, substituted for no apparent reason (I felt very much ripped off) He still looked as if he could hold his own even at 39 years of age. As I made my way towards the exit with thirty minutes to go some wag snaffled me three bucks for the 'studs up' fanzine, didn't mind the price but

it was 3 months out of date, none the less a good read. Before I knew it. The final whistle had blown. What was the score I inquired to some shifty dude selling five varieties of bagged nuts from out of a box and three varieties of un-cut tobacco from below. Four-nil he smirked through smoke stained teeth. Crikey I thought as I continued towards the exit "four-nil" as I followed the masses, "to who" I heard my-elf thinking, fleeced again I mused "walking in a Beardsley wonderland"!

True Blue Romantic

I DON'T WANT TO BE A PESSIMIST, BUT....

I don't want to be a pessimist but sometimes I wish I'd caught the Titanic before it sailed off that day for the first and last time. I missed it because my team at the time, Donegal Disembowellers, were involved in a semi of the Irish Mug (pre-dating the cup) and required three periods of extra time before bowing out 10 nil (they really did tire in that last period, plus five send offs didn't help - bloody Eddie o'Lennie). I tore my ticket up and caught a train to Dublin where a Black and Tan mistook me for his brother and beat ten kinds of crap out of me. It could have been worse I thought, he might have thought I was his sister. Call me cynical, but you see what I mean about missing the Titanic?

Anyway, while the rich and famous and not so famous steamed across the Atlantic to oblivion, I gambled the night away on a packet steamer bound for sooty London. My companion was a former surgeon who'd once played right back for St. Gore in the Fields, come on hard times, and who was embarked on a born again surgical role in London's East End. When he'd finished detailing his plans for those shady denizens of Whitechapel I found that I hadn't won a bet. He was much too sharp. I smiled thinly at him and then locked myself and what little I had left in my cabin. All in all it was a ripper of a time.

London was London; foggy, cold, diseased, and that was on a good day! And one hell of a place to get Cup Final tickets. The year I finally succeeded, and I digress a little, so did about 120,000 others and it took a lone constable on his white horse to clear the pitch before the game could start. And guess whose foot that bloody great horse crushed with his bloody great clumsy hoo? You got it in one.

INSIDE SOCCER AUSSIE SOCCER'S BIGGEST AND BEST COVERAGE!

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Before the white horse final I'd tried my luck as a coach with Partisan Two Ends in good old Serbia. One day we were due to play the famous Hajduk Split. We plotted their downfall for many hours and then declared ourselves happy with the plans. Tomorrow, I said, we'll kill Hajduk. One of my players, Blue Serge, headed off after training, muttering to himself. We didn't think much of it until he returned to announce he'd done it. Done what? Killed that Archduke, he said. Oh, no, we cried, Hajduk - not the Archduke. It seems he was a little hard of hearing. Of course, it was all over the newspapers the next day, and all over the Western Front for the next four years. Oh for the Titanic.

In later years, old, frail, very tired, but adequately compensated by a pensioner's allowance and free breakfast at the Tabaret of my choice, I drifted down the oceans to a land called Oz. In my lucid moments I wasn't much chop, but when I was out of it I ventured back to the old drug - football. And found myself at OP. And I know you'll guess instantly when that was. Oh yes, the night Carlton took on SM Helpus for the trophy. I'd latched onto Carlton because Sterge the Purge reminded me so much of old Blue Serge (I still reckon Sterge will start a war one day). And we all know what happened that night. That night of infamy when a team of good all round lads were denied their glory by a team of real nasties led craftily by Con 'I didn't drive the car your honor' Boutsianis.

I still potter around with the True Blues but mostly I wonder what might have been if I'd caught the Titanic. Knowing my luck I would probably have been one of the survivors.

Bluie Stewie



Dear MBH,

As we head into the final third of the season, Carlton find themselves in deep trouble, not only on but off the field. It has a

familiar and unfortunate ring to it, the season of 98-99 being foremost in the mind.

The Team: The team is playing not only without confidence but without care. Our defence for all its talent, is as a group, an insipid mess, with not even Alex Tobin (AZZZIZI) capable of causing such a debacle. We lack any sort of structure and with the continual changes that keep occurring cannot be expected to have any either. Even those of a (heaven forbid) AFL upbringing are left screaming at the gaping holes we continually allow the opposition to run into when shooting. For God's sake get some men between the shooter and Deano. Contrast that with the chock full penalty area we have to endure when we're shooting (when we do shoot) and it's no wonder we're getting done by the Melbourne Knights three zip.

What's worse is that WE know we cannot score, in fact we don't even look like scoring, the lack of self belief becoming even more apparent as the season goes on. Sure Moriera's got 11 for the season, but the bottom line is and we all agree on this one, is that Moriera doesn't make goals, he capitalises on opportunity and that's no good when you're not making opportunity. Kennedy is simply not ready, not quick enough, not good enough at this stage and the fact that the kid gets a game before big Jonesy is a disgrace both to the selection committee and also the board. What we need to do is bite the bullet. It's time to stop bagging our own, in particular Conroy, Moriera and Deano and start playing some attacking football. We cannot win games being nil (or one

for that matter) at 90 minutes, and things cannot get any worse.

If anyone is going to turn our season around it'll be our own Mick Conroy. We wrote in a past (hitherto unpublished) article about how we despaired at his lack of form compared to his overseas exploits and have been widely chastised for it, but we also signalled that we wanted Mick to start and play 90 minutes for a minimum 3 games in succession. In the blokes' defence, he's played probably 60 minutes of footy in the past month and cannot be expected to perform when used like that. The club has to face facts and look to a way of scoring, for as we have stated before, the season cannot get any worse. If Conroy happens to get on the end of something decent from Stabber, Archie or Lubo (the three who carry us every week) then maybe, just maybe the floodgates will open. No doubt the guy's a top bloke either, his Gippsland carry on was testimony to that , but the fact is unless he starts scoring in the last 10 games, our season and his career are as good as over.

The Club: Next to the club, and in particular it's coach, vision, and fans. If Munro isn't going to attempt to play some attacking football, he has simply got to go. It's no good screaming about bad refereeing, and how bad we are every week, holding extra training sessions, rambling on about how good the academy side is, just get the guys scoring. Don't as you say in 'the Age' feel for Conroy, play the bloke or send him home. Play three up front, do anything, it matters nothing if go down every week from here on in. The simple fact is, we have to win games or we won't make the finals and we cannot win being zero at 90 minutes.

As for the club, the question has to be asked, what in God's name have they done to us? Our first year side would destroy the current one 6 or 7 nil, as an

example, look what has happened since 97. We've lost home grown champs like Bresciano, Grella, Vlahos, Cervinski and replaced them with 30 something has-beens from English lower divisions. Markovski tops our scoring in the first season, asks for more cash doesn't get it and goes West. Any wonder the bloke is jacked off with the Club. The attempt to Anglicise the club has failed miserably, with even a Scottish coach recruited from of all places, Leskieville, a joke. Fair enough Eddie K had his swish suits and styled bouffon but at least he developed some talent within the club and played some attacking football.

The British influence to this point has given us little, and is certainly not the direction a budding club should be taking as it moves into an uncertain future. What gets us more upset, is the attempt at self interested British fandom both within this fanzine and down behind the goals. We were advised by those closely associated with and often part of this group, not to ridicule the club and it's players (Conroy in particular) after the last article we produced. Talk about glass houses guys! What gets us even more irate, is that this group claim to be the Carlton faithful, but bar for Trumper (who CAN see the light yet lacks the bottom to announce it), their sole interest in Carlton is not for the side but for their own. On this note, it is no wonder that the Carlton soccer club fails to incorporate 'my blue heaven' as an official publication. Furthermore, and this can be taken as constructive criticism, do not go calling the fanzine 'voice of the fans' by the fans when it's not. Give the supporters a say if you are 'fair dinkum', provoke some debate rather than a self directed view and perhaps the publication will actually fly as something half decent.

We are also of the understanding that one of our most loyal and outspoken supporters should quote 'look out' because certain people think he's a nob. Sunday at Knights Stadium was testimony to what the majority think. They love this individual's carry on, and recognise that such outspokenness is merely an expression of passion and belief and likewise believe that the English idiots are indeed just that - idiots. We challenge those who have a problem with this most loyal of supporter to test the waters, for the only people to have a real problem with him are those with the aforementioned self interest.

Further to this, we were amused at how a couple of self inducted Carlton stalwarts (and you know who you are) distanced themselves from the British brigade after their barrage of unwarranted abuse at Deano last Sunday. Anyone who stood behind the goals last Sunday would have appreciated the first Knights goal from 35 yards as the best of the season. Rather than acknowledging the strike as akin to anything in London, (Fulham included) these buffoons took to giving Deano an absolute caning, when even Bosnich couldn't have got within metres of it. These are the same guys who regularly scream abuse AT Moriera. No wonder both these players are screaming abuse back at their OWN crowd. Once again as AFL spectators we've never seen anything like it. Sure we have a go at Conroy, but as we have said before, we want the guy to do well and will be first on the pitch when he finally does score. We have never abused him, moreover lamented at his lack of form.

Sunday was embarrassing for anyone who calls themselves a true supporter. The lambasting chants that were later directed at these blokes is proof that the real Carlton faithful does not consist of anyone who wishes to be associated with these idiots. Furthermore, those who see themselves as Club leaders should have a good hard look at their supporters and decide who it really is that they should having a go at in the future.

The Future: Right now, the Club needs to band together and eliminate the dream of try hard Poms trying to recreate what they have at home. We have to understand that we don't need to have a British accent, funny hat, or publish a fanzine to be a true supporter. We need to be all inclusive and be approachable to the general public and what we certainly don't need is silly ads involving beer swilling fat English blokes. What we need is hard core support week in week out and with these idiots around we're never going to get it. It's time for the club and it's supporters to get their act together and build something. Give people a reason to come down to Carlton: otherwise we will fold. No idiot is going to keep ploughing the dollars in if we're not getting a.) Crowds and b.) Results. And God forbid anyone who may have to end up barracking for the Knights , dirty Hellas or Gippsland.

We need to have a good hard look at clubs like the Knights, Perth , Northern Spirit and understand why they get crowds of 5000 plus every week.

WHO PUT THE BALL IN THE HELLAS NET COMPETITION



Congratulations to the winner of the shirt signed by the team - R. Kleckman of The Basin, Melbourne.

Question: Who scored the winning goal against South Melbourne in this season's round 12 tie at Bob Jane Stadium?

Answer: Andrew 'Stabber' Marth

Northern Spirit should be a learning experience for us all, primarily a family affair where the peanut gallery is sectioned off to where they can carry on all they like away from the majority, yet still very much part of it. We need grass roots support for the very simple reason that this is what the game is in Australia, grass roots. It is not, and never will be and never should try to be British, we need to keep our Australianness and promote it. That means local players, local support : as the chant went last week, 'proud to be an Aussie'. Lou Sticca did a great job for Carlton, taking it from nothing to a potentially great club. Lets just hope that the real reason he jumped ship wasn't because he was smart enough to see it sinking. Indeed if it is sinking, one can safely bet that the first rats to jump with him will be the British buffoon brigade down at the beer garden.

Come on Carlton , do-more !
Chris and Julian (aka The Weeds)

Ed: Readers should note that this letter was recieved after the Melbourne Knights game. Just to clarify a couple of the points about mbh and the people involved. Firstly it's important to point out that no one at the fanzine gets paid any money for their services and so stand to gain no personal benefits. Yes we are 'the voice of the fans', but sadly due to space limitations and editorial standards we cannot print every contribution that we receive. It would be impossible to present every view. If you think we do such a shit job, why don't you start a fanzine of your own? Finally as to not being incorporated by the club. We have never wanted to be incorporated into the club, the whole point of a fanzine is that it's an independent voice. I'm sorry you don't enjoy the fanzine, but if that's the case you can just hang on to your \$2... but there's really no need to shout at the fanzine sellers on the way in... they don't get paid you know and sacrifice valuable drinking time.

Dear mbh,
I am but a fringe dweller to the mighty Blues, although having had a passing interest since their inception, it wasn't till this season that I ventured to a game for the first time. This, I might add was due to the relocation to Olympic Park. The access and the locational convenience being the initial drawcard and the addition of the Brit pack an added bonus to satisfy my intrigue.

I've missed the occasional game due to work commitments but now find myself becoming more involved as I become attached through association with the east stand.

I acknowledge that the club is trying very hard to find the right direction in which to take and I am sure those with a financial interest are scratching their heads as to the reason the fan base is not growing. For what it's worth I believe a name-change should be high on the agenda. My own preference would be 'Southern Cross Rebels' a link to a romantic past which is quite Australian, we could still play in a blue strip and Eureka flags (surely these conform to Soc. Aus. directives) are easy to come by, not to mention the broad range of songs and chants that could be coined to suit any occasion. "Under the southern cross we stand a twig of wattle in our hand" Yes a little poetic verse at volume would inspire any team. "and the band played waltzing matilda" as Redgum is blasted over the p.a system prior to the start of a game. "Hey True Blue.....is it me and you" would make Gerry Marsden weep as he walks alone up Anfield Road.

The approach to the target audience has not worked, the T.V. ads have not worked, the beer garden a good concept - spoilt by its vulgar and out-dated dark-side will never work.

Gordon Ottershaw (Michael Palin) famous fan of the fictional Barnstoneworth United once said "Its what's inside that counts" as he fistted his chest. I firmly believe the void which the blues hierarchy are striving to fill is still out there waiting to be tapped. Mr and Mrs Joe Average and kids want to be caught up in the atmosphere and passion evident at the big occasion socceroo games in recent years. Give them an opportunity to express an emotional attachment which already exists within them. Give them an entity which not only portrays its multiculturalism but promotes its Ozism give them a platform to express their rebellious republicanism - distinctly Victorian and uniquely Australian "Give them a feeling of common cause, give them the 'Rebels' under the 'Southern Cross' do more, feel the passion.

True Blue Romantic

Write to:my blue heaven,
PO Box 235,Brunswick,Vic. 3056
or e-mail:mbheaven@hotmail.com

FOOTBALL SHORTS

More Carlton on SBS

FS noted a glaring omission on SBS's World Sports show on Monday 10th April. They showed all the results from the day before, with the exception of Sydney United v. Carlton. When the round was then discussed, the result still wasn't mentioned. In looking at the top six Carlton was mentioned once briefly. With Carlton having won 5 out of 6 matches and being the only Victorian club with realistic finals aspirations FS thought we might be worth a mention.

Security?

There has been much talk among fans about the security guards at OP... (ie they're about as useful as a chocolate teapot). However they always seemed to be a bit gobby and harmless... that is until recently.

Maybe the 'Perth' fans trying to rough up a lone Carlton supporter (so brave that) got security a bit over-excited and encouraged them to be even more pedantic about harmless actions than usual.

It was perturbing to see a security man wrestle one of our particularly mild mannered number to the ground after he took a short cut. Not jumping onto the arena but onto the beer garden that

we've been encouraged to use all season. This harmless shortcut has been used by young and old all season yet suddenly this is no longer acceptable and is interpreted as threatening behaviour. The said security guard's rugby tackle on the fan seemed like an awful over reaction and had the potential to cause more trouble than the initial petty infringement.

Part time Supporters?

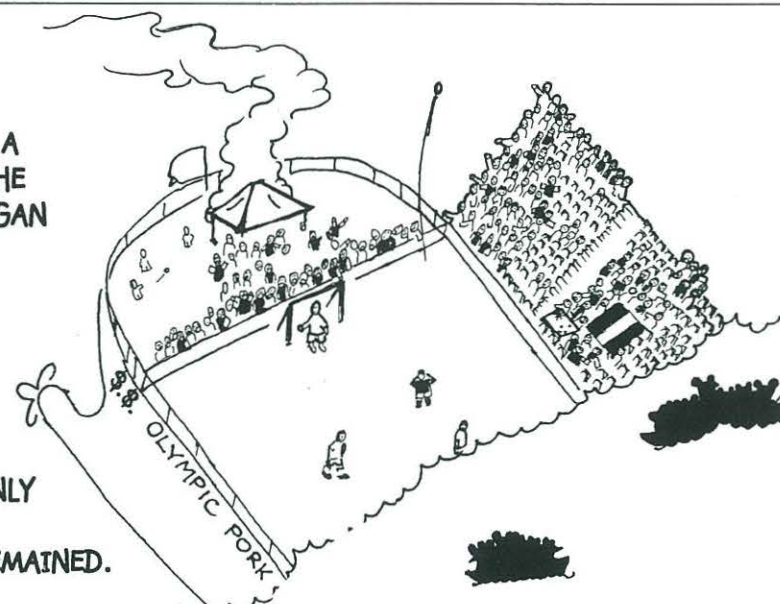
It seems like Carlton are not the only ones who's crowds are dropping. The Eastern Stand of Olympic Park was surprising empty when Smellas came to visit. The light blues used to fill that stand. Surely it can't be that their faithful are lying low now their team are not in with a chance of another Championship? What will they sing next season when they can't claim to be 'Champions' anymore? Or will they just stay home?

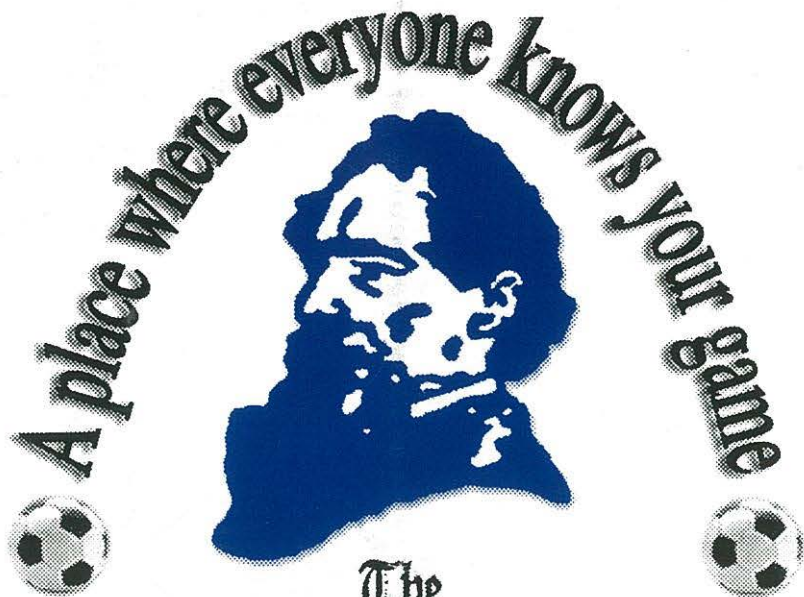
Do you come from Perth?

It was interesting to note that most of the Perth Glory fans at Olympic Park for the Glory match did in fact come from Melbourne. Why support a team that you can only see play 3 times a year at local fixtures away and being a stranger to your teams own home ground and support?

THE CLUB,
HAVING
STRUCK AN
ICEBERG NOT A
THIRD INTO THE
JOURNEY, BEGAN
TAKING ON
WATER...

BY MARCH ONLY
THE BAND
AND CREW REMAINED.





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